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State Dept. review completed

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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

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DIA review(s) completed.

Where's Komocsin?

Hungarian Politburo member Zoltan Komocsin has not attended any of the talks or festivities connected with Brezhnev's visit--an absence made all the more conspicuous by the presence of Konstantin Katushev, Soviet party secretary for bloc relations. The 49-year old Komocsin, whose responsibilities lie within the same area, should have been present at the first day of official talks; Katushev was there, but the Hungarian side was represented by lesser lights in the party foreign affairs department.

Despite his relative youth and the absence of any history of ill health, we suspect that Komocsin is ill rather than suffering from any political difficulties. The media last reported Komocsin active in late September, when he received an Indian communist party delegation. If Komocsin had fallen into political disgrace, there would have been ample opportunity since then for his removal from the leadership, most notably at the Central Committee session held earlier this month.

Komocsin has been most frequently described as an opportunistic hard-liner, whose tutelage of foreign affairs has often attracted Moscow's eye. He was very active in helping Moscow to prepare the 1969 International Conference of Communist Parties. In the summer of 1971, Komocsin directed some pointed criticism at Romania, a move that was widely interpreted as having been done at Moscow's behest.

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US-Bulgarian Relations Continue to Improve

A Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs official has asked that the pending US-Bulgarian consular treaty be completed by the first of the year. The approach came during a reception on 26 November for the US congressional delegation led by Senator Symington. Negotiations on a consular convention have been stalled since May 1971.

The Bulgarians also appear to have dropped the need for a preparatory visit--other than that of deputy Foreign Trade

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Minister Andrey Lukanov slated for January--prior to Deputy Premier Ivan Popov's trip to Washington [REDACTED] 25X1
[REDACTED] Popov, who talked with Ambassador Torbert during the same reception, indicated he would like to come to the US in March and that Lukanov could lay the groundwork. 25X1
As for possible commercial agreements, during the Lukanov visit, Popov suggested that the existing agreement between the US and USSR would serve as an "excellent model." [REDACTED]

Bulgarians Praise Soviet Efforts At CSCE

To the surprise of no one, the Bulgarians have greeted MPT with resounding praise for Moscow's efforts on behalf of peace and detente in Europe. The party daily, Rabotnichesko Delo, greeted the opening of talks in Helsinki last week by arguing that the "consistent and instant policy of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact member states...has forced the opponents of peace and understanding in Europe to take the wishes of the people into account and render ineffective their opposition...to build a new and peaceful Europe."

In marked contrast to their Romanian neighbors, the Bulgars make no mention of the right of the participants to full equality in the gathering. With regard to MPT itself, the Bulgars said, there are very limited objectives--to determine the "concrete date, place and procedure for the conference and the basic items of the agenda". [REDACTED] 25X1

Rumored Shakeup In Bulgarian Ministry of Interior

In mid-September the number of deputy ministers in the Ministry of Interior was increased from six to eight. The two new-comers are Major General Minko Minkov (the former commander of the border guards) and Lt. General Dimitur Kyosev. The changes are apparently part of a general tightening and reorganization of the internal security services that may involve the arrest of some fairly prominent security officials for as yet unexplained reasons.

The USDAO in Sofia reports hearing from a Western Attache that the head of the Plovdiv Milita, Major General Sarnizhev, was arrested in late October or early November. Rumors are also circulating that a number of Bulgarian "functionaries" were arrested in Varna for unexplained reasons. The failure

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of any of these rumors to explain the arrests may mean the Bulgarians are on one of their periodic house cleanings in which a number of heads roll--more as a warning than for any real crime.

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Bulgaria Halts Jamming of Radio Skopje

Bulgaria appears to have made another concession to the Yugoslavs in their dispute over the Macedonian question. The Embassy in Sofia reports Radio Skopje (the capital of the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) has not been jammed since around 1 November.

Bulgarian interference with the reception of Radio Skopje has been a stumbling bloc to improve Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations for some time. In Belgrade's eyes, the jamming was proof of Sofia's denial of the existence of an independent Macedonian nation, language and culture--a denial which carried with it overtones of Bulgarian claims on Yugoslav territory because of the Bulgarian assertion that all Macedonians are Bulgars.

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The Yugoslav Embassy admits making repeated complaints about the jamming, but denies the interference came to an end as a result of any recent agreement.

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The Srednoridski File

Conjuring up visions of Balkan intrigue--complete with an alleged kidnapping of a "rocket expert"--the Austrian press has been having a field day with the disappearance of Seyko Srednoridski. Srednoridski, a 40 year old Bulgarian engineer, fled Sofia last September via Yugoslavia to Austria. In Vienna he applied for US immigration.

A check has failed to turn up any evidence that Srednoridski is a rocket expert. He was trained in the Soviet Union as an engineer--conflicting reports indicate that he is either an electrical or mechanical engineer. From 1962 to 1972 he was an engineer with the Ministry of Construction, Srednoridski has now been missing almost two weeks.

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NOTE : THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE REPRESENT ONLY THE ANALYSIS OF THE EE BRANCH.

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INTELLIGENCER ANNEX

Form and Content of Hungarian Cultural Policy

Recent party pronouncements on cultural matters have contained some rather tough words, but there are no signs of an accompanying clampdown on intellectuals. Budapest's semi-pluralistic cultural policy, which allows a relative abundance of Western cultural imports, continues unabated. Much of the verbal exercise seems designed for orthodox Soviet ears--in part a response to Moscow's call for ideological purity as detente proceeds. At the same time, the exercise may well have the effect of reinforcing the customary caution and rigorous self-censorship that have long characterized Hungarian cultural life.

The call for orthodoxy has been directed specifically at artistic criticism. An October party declaration on the subject, inspired perhaps by a similar Soviet document in January, blasted critics who vacillate from the "Marxist position" and named some offenders. The document stimulated debate in the media, during which one writer objected to the "roll-call of names," but at the same time pointed out that the declaration was intended only to stimulate a debate. The recent party central committee session again called for rigorous Marxist criticism, both to educate the public and to "ideologically influence creators."

While artistic criticism has been taking its lumps, there are no signs of any greater prohibitions on publishing. In fact, the call for more principled "Marxist" criticism has been squarely placed within the context of Budapest's flexible cultural policy, the cornerstone of which is debate. In this context, artistic criticism is set up as the ideological cutting edge ("the hegemony of Marxism must necessarily be stronger in artistic criticism than it is in the artistic process"), one which "encourages" the "socialistic character" of art. The increase of socialist democracy, so the argument goes in the October declaration, is accompanied by the sharpening of debate with the more open non-Marxist viewpoint. Nonetheless, the proper way to act against non-socialist works of an artistic value, we are told, is to strengthen the "Marxist critical base" rather than to narrow publishing opportunities. This latter point, central to Budapest's flexible cultural policy, was reaffirmed even more explicitly in the plenum communique. It asserted that the party "provides the support for its non-Marxist, non-Communist allies, which they could not receive nor expect from others."

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While reiterating its flexible publishing policies, the regime typically is moving to improve the position of works with the appropriate "socialist outlook" by increasing subsidies. The communique called for a reexamination of the system of economic regulation in culture, with an eye toward greater state support for "valuable" works.

Much of this verbal exercise stems from a Hungarian reading of Soviet calls for ideological unity in the face of detente. At the same time, it may be tied to any Soviet misgivings over the looser edges of the internal Hungarian scene as well as the leadership's own concern over the proper ideological orientation of the populace, especially young people. A nationalist outburst in mid-March by a group of secondary students, although not unprecedented, came at a time of heightened Soviet-Hungarian economic differences and greatly embarrassed the regime. The leakage of the incident into the Western press only increased the embarrassment and, from the Hungarian standpoint, called for some public tidying up.

Words aside, there are no signs of clampdown on such activities as the importation of Western culture, a highly visible and somewhat measurable phenomenon. Such a flamboyant character as Zoltan Varkonyi, director of the Vigszinhaz and a leading importer of American plays, apparently continues to ply his trade. Nonetheless, the almost conspiratorial caution of individual Hungarian cultural personalities may well result in a period of relative torpidity in the coming months. The regime can be expected to air an increasingly conservative position as the freer movement proposals come up in the CSCE preparatory talks.

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